

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

3 December 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

To subscribe, send an email to: HIO-ON@pasba2.amedd.army.mil

To unsubscribe, send an email to: HIO-OFF@pasba2.amedd.army.mil

This report is also available on the [USACHPPM website](#).

HOT TOPICS.....	2
Chocolate Ingredient May Calm Coughs	2
Dental X-Rays Could Screen for Osteoporosis	2
Eyewear to Help You Cross Roads.....	2
Flu Crisis Exposes Large Gaps in Bioterrorism Readiness.....	3
Girl First to Survive Rabies without Vaccine	3
High Stress Levels Linked to Cellular Aging	3
New Methods for Making Flu Vaccine.....	3
SARS Outbreak May Hit Asia This Winter, WHO Says.....	4
Scientists Grow Virus Tied to Food Poisoning	4
Scientists Test Ricin Vaccine	4
Studies Find Irradiation Suitable For Cilantro, Sprouts	4
Two Cipla AIDS Medicines Back on WHO Prequalification List.....	5
WHO Warns Of Dire Flu Pandemic.....	5
Focus on Epidemiology	5
World AIDS Day --- December 1, 2004.....	5
DoD-GEIS: Influenza Genome Sequencing.....	6
USCENTCOM	6
Bacterium infecting troops from Iraq, Afghanistan	6
Delivery Problems Hinder Flu Vaccination Program in Iraq	6
USEUCOM	7
Botswana Leader Warns on AIDS: Abstain or Die	7
Cold and Flu Rate of Pre-School Children High in 5 Russian Cities	7
Democratic Republic of Congo: Acute Typhoid Fever Kills 16; 144 Infected	7
Influenza Activity Remains Low In Europe	8
USNORTHCOM	8
California Drug Treatment Program Not a Total Success.....	8
Catholic Leaders Issue Advisory on Flu Precautions	8
Cigarettes Cost Smokers, Society \$40 a Pack.....	8
Flame Retardant Found in Great Lakes	9
Flu Season Off To Slow Start, Officials Say.....	9
Illinois and New Mexico Governors Write to Aventis Pasteur	9

Possible Botulism Reported After Cosmetic Injections	9
Red Cross Sees Problems at Guantanamo	10
Rocket Fuel Chemical Found In Water, Produce	10
Supreme Court to Hear Marijuana Case	10
Suspect Animal Tests Negative For Mad Cow	10

USPACOM 11

Bacterial Outbreak Kills Six People in Baguio City, Philippines	11
Hong Kong: Two More Children Sick with Respiratory Infection	11
India to Start Trial of New HIV Vaccine	11
Indonesia: Dengue Outbreaks in Medan and Indragiri Hilir Regions	11
Indonesia: Malaria Outbreak in Aceh	12
Japanese Cows Get ID Codes	12

USSOUTHCOM..... 12

Surgery Performed Aboard 'Air Hospital'	12
---	----

HOT TOPICS

Chocolate Ingredient May Calm Coughs

24 November - FoxNews.com reported that an ingredient in chocolate may provide relief from constant coughing. The study showed that [theobromine](#), an ingredient found in cocoa, was much more effective in stopping persistent coughs than codeine -- the cough medicine currently considered most effective. Although this was a small study involving only 10 people, researchers say that if more studies confirm these results, the chocolate ingredient could be used in creating better cough medicines with fewer side effects than existing drugs. Unlike other cough medicines on the market, researchers say the chocolate ingredient did not appear to cause any negative side effects, such as drowsiness. [View Article](#)

Dental X-Rays Could Screen for Osteoporosis

30 November – Reuters reported that dentists may be able to help screen women for [osteoporosis](#) by looking at X-rays that they are taking anyway. Panoramic dental X-rays, which show the whole jaw, can also show the beginnings of low skeletal bone mineral density which is the first step toward osteoporosis. The X-rays were just as sensitive as questionnaires in identifying the women who were likely to have the beginnings of osteoporosis. Women may be more likely to take a trip to the dentist's office than to get checked for osteoporosis. Women with a small frame, of Caucasian descent and who are poorly nourished have a higher risk of osteoporosis. Worldwide, 30 to 40 percent of all women and one in five of all men will have osteoporosis in their lives, often severe enough to cause a bone fracture according to the [International Osteoporosis Foundation](#). [View Article](#)

Eyewear to Help You Cross Roads

1 December – CNN reported that crossing the road may soon be as straightforward -- and safe -- for blind and visually impaired people as it is for someone with good eyesight, thanks to a new device that acts as an "electronic eye." Two Japanese scientists have developed the navigation system, which is attached to a pair of spectacles. Using a camera, the device detects when the wearer is

approaching a "zebra" pedestrian crossing by identifying the crossing's white stripes, how far the other side of the road is and what color traffic light is showing. It then sends the information to a tiny computer, relaying the necessary information via a voice speech system and speaker, situated near the wearer's ear. [View Article](#)

Flu Crisis Exposes Large Gaps in Bioterrorism Readiness

28 November – The Chicago Tribune reported that problems producing flu vaccines have highlighted the difficulties facing the U.S. government as it tries to counter [bioweapons](#). The U.S. is substantially ahead of where it was three years ago, experts say, but further progress is urgently needed. The nation's public health network was long neglected. Many state and municipal offices lacked adequate computer and communications technologies. There is still a relative lack of vaccines to prevent outbreaks caused by microbes that experts worry most about and drugs to treat those infected. There is no effective vaccine for some pathogens. It is a problem likely to take years to fix due to lengthy lead times necessary to develop effective vaccines and treatments. The pharmaceutical industry has also not rushed to make the needed products because it is not clear that companies could recoup their costs. A related problem is the lack of a way to quickly diagnose people infected with the most serious pathogens. And, despite preparedness efforts, a major bioterrorism attack infecting hundreds or thousands would quickly overwhelm health-care providers in most regions. Earlier this year, President Bush enacted Bioshield legislation, aimed at providing billions of dollars in incentives for drug companies to develop products that could protect Americans against bioterrorism attacks. But a recent survey of experts in the field found the government's efforts will not "produce the countermeasures the nation needs for a truly effective biodefense." [View Article](#)

Girl First to Survive Rabies without Vaccine

24 November - FoxNews.com reported that a unique combination of drugs has made a 15-year-old girl the first known human to survive [rabies](#) without vaccination. A team of physicians gambled on an experimental treatment and induced a coma in Jeanna Giese to stave off the usually fatal infection. "No one had really done this before, even in animals," said Dr. Rodney Willoughby, a pediatric disease infection specialist at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. "None of the drugs are fancy. If this works it can be done in a lot of countries." Willoughby said the treatment, which includes two anesthetics and two antiviral medications, will have to be duplicated in another patient before it can be credited as a rabies treatment. [View Article](#)

High Stress Levels Linked to Cellular Aging

30 November – Science News reported that [stress](#) may take a toll on your health by affecting the strands of DNA on the ends of chromosomes, new research suggests. A report published online today by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences indicates that women with higher psychological stress levels have shorter telomeres, which play an important role in cellular aging. What is more, the difference between stressed study participants and the control group was equivalent to nearly a decade of additional aging. [View Article](#)

New Methods for Making Flu Vaccine

26 November – AZCentral.com reported that it currently takes about six months to make [flu vaccine](#). But promising new manufacturing methods are on the horizon, including one using viruses grown in cultured cells from monkeys, dogs or human stem cells, that could significantly speed the vaccine-making process. Researchers caution that perfecting the new techniques of making flu vaccine may take several years. Almost all of today's flu vaccine supply is made by growing influenza viruses in

specialty cultivated chicken eggs. "It takes hundreds of millions of eggs to produce one year's flu vaccine and clean eggs are not always available year 'round in that quantity," said William Hillegas, the chief investigator for a flu virus-growing study funded by the National Center for Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "Using animal cells to grow the viruses allows you to scale up much more quickly," Hillegas said, "You can grow the flu viruses in these cells on a much larger scale using massive bio-reactors." Hillegas said the cell-culture methodology would allow "100 million or even 200 million doses to be made" in less time that it now takes to make a single batch of egg-cultured vaccine. [View Article](#)

SARS Outbreak May Hit Asia This Winter, WHO Says

29 November – Bloomberg reported that an outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or [SARS](#), may hit Asia this winter, the World Health Organization. Asia, including Hong Kong and China is better prepared to tackle infectious diseases like SARS in a "possible" outbreak in the region in the coming months, the statement said. "I don't think a large outbreak is likely," Shigeru Omi, western Pacific regional director of the United Nations' Health Agency, said in the statement. SARS is "almost certainly still present in the animal world in southern China, and, as long as it stays, it would continue to be a threat." The "principal worry now," is an "influenza pandemic, possibly with catastrophic consequences for world health," the statement said. [View Article](#)

Scientists Grow Virus Tied to Food Poisoning

30 November - HealthDayNews reported that for the first time, scientists have grown a [norovirus](#) -- a common cause of food poisoning -- in the laboratory. Noroviruses are highly contagious and cause diarrhea, vomiting and other problems. Researchers grew the mouse norovirus MNV-1 inside cells from mice with defective immune systems. This finding could help scientists learn more about the mouse norovirus and may help other researchers find ways to grow human noroviruses in the laboratory and produce vaccines. "By looking at the mouse virus we'd grown in the lab, we were able to identify a part of the capsid, the virus's protein shell, that is essential to its ability to cause disease," senior author Dr. Skip Virgin, a professor of pathology and immunology and molecular biology, said in a prepared statement. "If this part of the capsid has an equivalent in human noroviruses, altering or disabling it may give us a way to produce forms of the viruses that are weak enough to serve as vaccines," Virgin said. [View Article](#)

Scientists Test Ricin Vaccine

30 November – HealthDayNews reported that researchers will start conducting human clinical trials to test the safety of an experimental vaccine against [ricin](#), the deadly toxin. The researchers received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to test the genetically engineered protein vaccine RiVax. In this trial, volunteers will be given the vaccine and their blood will then be checked to see if their bodies produce protective antibodies. Those antibodies would then be injected into mice that would be exposed to lethal doses of ricin in order to assess the protective effects of the human antibodies. As little as 500 micrograms of ricin -- an amount that would fit on the head of a pin -- can kill an adult. [View Article](#)

Studies Find Irradiation Suitable For Cilantro, Sprouts

29 November - CIDRAP News reported that [irradiating](#) fresh cilantro and sprouts can reduce levels of potentially dangerous microbes without affecting flavor or other sensory attributes. Food irradiation entails exposing food to ionizing radiation in the form of gamma rays, high-energy electrons, or x-rays.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved low-dose irradiation of fresh fruits and vegetables to inhibit sprouting and control insects, but not to reduce pathogens. Similarly, the FDA has approved irradiating seeds to limit sprouting, but has not approved irradiation of sprouts to control pathogens. The FDA identified cilantro as one of the products most often contaminated in tests of imported produce in 1999. Researchers inoculated cilantro with *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 and then exposed it to a chlorine solution (200 ppm) or low-dose gamma irradiation, or both. The combination of chlorination and irradiation reduced *E. coli* counts the most. [View Article](#)

Two Cipla AIDS Medicines Back on WHO Prequalification List

1 December - The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that it is reinstating two antiretrovirals manufactured by Cipla Ltd., India, in its list of prequalified medicines. The two medicines (which are used in the treatment of [AIDS](#)) had been delisted by WHO in May for non-compliance with international standards at the contract research organizations hired by Cipla to conduct bioequivalence tests on the products. The manufacturer carried out new bioequivalence studies to confirm that the two medicines are as effective as their respective brand-name counterparts. [View Article](#)

WHO Warns Of Dire Flu Pandemic

25 November – CNN.com reported that the World Health Organization has issued a dramatic warning that [bird flu](#) will trigger an international pandemic that could kill up to seven million people. The influenza pandemic could occur anywhere from next week to the coming years, WHO said. "There is no doubt there will be another pandemic," said Klaus Stohr of the WHO Global Influenza Program. "Even with the best case scenario, the most optimistic scenario, the pandemic will cause a public health emergency with estimates which will put the number of deaths in the range of two and seven million," he said. "The number of people affected will go beyond billions because between 25 percent and 30 percent will fall ill." With a human vaccine to the bird flu virus not expected until March 2005 at the earliest, urgency is being placed on containment. Scientists are busy working on vaccines for bird flu and other viruses. Two U.S. companies have said they plan to test experimental bird flu vaccines from January. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

World AIDS Day --- December 1, 2004

26 November – MMWR reported that World AIDS Day 2004 focuses on the increasing vulnerability of women to human immunodeficiency virus ([HIV](#)) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome ([AIDS](#)) with the theme, Women, Girls, HIV, and AIDS. Globally, women account for nearly half of adults living with HIV. However, in some African countries, HIV prevalence is nearly five times greater among young women than men. In the United States, women in racial/ethnic minority populations are especially vulnerable. In 2003, black and Hispanic women accounted for 25% of all U.S. women but 83% of women with diagnosed AIDS. Black women were 25 times more likely and Hispanic women six times more likely than white women to have diagnosed AIDS. In 2002, surveys of U.S. adults indicated that one tenth had been tested for HIV during the previous year. CDC estimates one fourth of the approximately 900,000 persons living with HIV in the United States do not know that they are infected, are not receiving treatments, and might unknowingly transmit HIV to others. [View Article](#)

DoD-GEIS: Influenza Genome Sequencing

1 December - The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced a joint influenza genome sequencing project. Collaborators include St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN, Wadsworth Center (New York State Department of Health in Albany, NY), the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP), the Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) in Rockville, MD and CDC. DoD routinely shares influenza isolates from the DoD Global Influenza Surveillance program with CDC (and WHO), collaborating closely with CDC on isolates of interest. According to NIAID the objective of the genome project is to help researchers understand how flu viruses evolve, spread and cause disease; it has the potential to improve scientific knowledge of the emergence of pandemic flu viruses and reduce the burden of annual flu outbreaks through knowledge of potential targets for new flu vaccines, therapies and diagnostics. Complete genetic blueprints, to include thousands of known human and avian influenza viruses will be produced. Sequence information will be publicly available through GenBank®; NIAID will make this an international, searchable online database. St. Jude has a repository containing more than 12,000 avian influenza viruses collected over the past 27 years and will be the site for the sequencing of their genomes. The project expects to enhance pandemic preparedness efforts by publishing genomic sequences of emerging avian influenza viruses to facilitate analysis and vaccine development. Informative influenza web sites include [CDC](#), [IOM](#) and [WHO](#). Information on Influenza (avian and human) including the DoD Global Influenza Program, WNV, Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available from [DoD-GEIS](#).

Other timely information can be found in:

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)
This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Bacterium infecting troops from Iraq, Afghanistan

1 December 2004 – The Houston Chronicle reported that government health officials are urging stronger infection control procedures in military hospitals following a number of infections among troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bacterium [Acinetobacter baumannii](#), which is resistant to most antibiotic drugs, could be infecting troops on the battlefield and ending up in field hospitals along with casualties from conflicts in the Middle East. The infection's spread in hospitals prompted health officials to stress better infection control methods. Dr. David Dooley, director of infection control at Brooke Army Medical Center, and several other military physicians wrote on the growing number of such infections in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. The report listed 102 cases of patients at military medical facilities who developed serious *A. baumannii* infections, later spreading to the bloodstream. [View Article](#)

Delivery Problems Hinder Flu Vaccination Program in Iraq

30 November – The Stars and Stripes reported that the shortage of [flu vaccine](#) is causing trouble for some troops in north-central Iraq. A sign on the door of the hospital tent at Forward Operating Base Speicher warns patients there will be no more flu shots until further notice. "There is a mad scramble for vaccine," said Lt. Col. Bobby Jones, the hospital's deputy commander for clinical services. "It's not plentiful. Not everyone has gotten it." Capt. Sharon Parker, a family nurse practitioner who is the 67th CSH's immunization coordinator, isn't sure her troops will fare as well. She said she requested 4,000

doses of flu vaccine, enough to cover 2,700 medical personnel plus some spare. The unit has been given 1,000 doses and isn't currently expecting to receive any more. Medical officials in Baghdad said the shots are on the way. The 67th CSH wasn't supposed to give flu shots to everyone on base, Lt. Col. Marc Caouette, Multi-National Corps-Iraq pharmacy consultant in Baghdad said. Another unit has been given the mission of giving shots to troops in that region, but that unit hasn't been able to get to there yet, he said. Caouette said the military has enough vaccine in Iraq to inoculate all troops. He estimated that 75 percent of troops have received the shot, and everyone should be inoculated by the end of next week. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Botswana Leader Warns on AIDS: Abstain or Die

1 December - Reuters reported that Botswana President Festus Mogae issued a blunt message to his people on [HIV/AIDS](#): abstain from unsafe sex or die. Botswana, which has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, could not afford on its own to keep a rising number of patients alive and depended on outside funding, Mogae said. "It's not sustainable in the long term unless something happens to the infection. We have to say things like 'abstain or die'," said Mogae, speaking on World AIDS Day. Mogae said the national HIV prevalence rate was 37 percent. "We don't seem to be getting on top of it," he said. "But in the middle of the Second World War in 1943 you didn't stop fighting because you didn't seem to be making headway." [View Article](#)

Cold and Flu Rate of Pre-School Children High in 5 Russian Cities

30 November – Itar Tass reported that the [cold](#) and [flu](#) rate amongst pre-school children is higher than the epidemic threshold in five Russian cities according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The cold and flu rate is 14-16% higher than the epidemic threshold in Arkhangelsk, 27% higher in Barnaul, 11% higher in Yekaterinburg, 37% higher in Kaliningrad and 27% higher in Murmansk, National Flu Center head, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences Oleg Kiselyov said. He said a considerable increase of the cold and flu rate amongst children "did not have a large effect on the general dynamics of the cold and flu rate." In general, the flu rate is seasonal and non-epidemic, he said. Russia may have a flu epidemic shortly before the New Year, and the epidemic will reach its peak on January-February 2005. The National Flu Center does permanent monitoring of the cold and flu rate in 34 Russian citizens and exchanges information and virus strains with the WHO Geneva headquarters. [View Article](#)

Democratic Republic of Congo: Acute Typhoid Fever Kills 16; 144 Infected

28 November - Sixteen people have died of an acute form of [typhoid fever](#), and 144 others have become infected in recent weeks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). "We're talking about typhoid-fever complications called peritonitis, which is created by the puncturing of the intestine of the sick person, which could lead to death if the person is not treated in time," Dr. Miandolo Miakala, a medical inspector, said. "There is a 9 percent death rate, 16 people among the 150 cases that we've recorded in our hospitals in Kinshasa," he added. Miakala said the cases stem from a typhoid epidemic that was ravaging the city, a situation brought on by the town's cesspools, dirty waters, and lack of proper hygiene. [View Article](#)

Influenza Activity Remains Low In Europe

21 November – The European Influenza Surveillance Scheme reported that the intensity of [influenza](#) activity is low in Europe and the incidence of clinical activity remains at baseline levels. Only two viruses (Ireland) were detected by the sentinel surveillance networks in week 47/2004. The percentage of positive specimens was very low: only 0.6% all of the collected specimens (sentinel and non-sentinel) tested positive for influenza virus. While there was a small decrease in the number of influenza virus detections, the number of RSV detections is still increasing in several countries. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

California Drug Treatment Program Not a Total Success

28 November – HealthDayNews reported that California's new program that sends [drug offenders](#) to treatment instead of jail netted only mixed results in its early months. Almost one third of the offenders treated under the state's Proposition 36 were arrested again on drug charges within a year. Prop 36 was considered a bold move in tackling drug addiction by getting addicts help rather than letting them idle in overcrowded jails. It was closely watched by addiction and criminal-justice experts on a national level. One law enforcement official said that the program lacks oversight and sanctions against individuals who volunteer for treatment but don't remain clean. Proponents of the program, however, said Prop 36 has helped many other offenders get back on the straight and narrow. They also contended that a lack of treatment facilities was hampering its effectiveness. [View Article](#)

Catholic Leaders Issue Advisory on Flu Precautions

28 November – The Boston Globe reported that leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Boston and Springfield issued advisories to parishioners in recent weeks telling them that if they have the [flu](#) or a cold, they should forgo a handshake of fellowship as well as sipping from the Communion cup during Mass. One suggested that parishioners who are sick for any reason "can excuse themselves from Sunday worship out of respect for their fellow worshipers." Infectious-disease specialists hailed the church advisories, saying that the suggested actions could help prevent the spread of illness, especially among older Catholics who are among the most observant churchgoers. [View Article](#)

Cigarettes Cost Smokers, Society \$40 a Pack

28 November – HealthDayNews reported that [smokers](#) and society at large pay about \$40 in health care costs, insurance, taxes and lost earnings for every pack of cigarettes smoked. Health economists estimated this based on lifetime costs for a person who begins smoking at age 24 and continues the habit for about 60 years. Smokers themselves pay about \$33 of the tab, their families \$5.44 and society about \$1.44 per pack. The researchers studied data including Social Security earnings histories dating to 1951. Ironically, the costs to society via private pensions, Social Security and Medicare are actually less than the authors would have thought, since as study co-author Frank Sloan put it, "Smokers die at a younger age and don't draw on the funds they've paid into those systems." [View Article](#)

Flame Retardant Found in Great Lakes

25 November – Health Central reported that a flame retardant that's now illegal in many countries is showing up in places from Great Lakes fish to food at the grocery store and even in breast milk. [Polybrominated diphenyl ethers](#) (PBDEs) are commonly used chemicals that are added to plastics in such products as computers, televisions, carpets, and furniture. The researchers found that Lake Michigan's top predator fish, coho and chinook salmon, contain PBDEs at concentrations exceeding 100 parts per billion. "These are among the highest levels measured to date in open water fish anywhere in the world," Jon Manchester of the University of Wisconsin Water Science and Engineering Laboratory Manchester, said. If these trends continue, the researchers said, PBDEs will eventually become the main contaminants in the sediment. Studies by other researchers have found PBDE contamination in the breast milk of U.S. women at levels up to 20 times higher than in European women. High levels were also detected in supermarket foods, notably meat and seafood. Studies in mice and rats suggest that chronic exposure to PBDEs may damage the liver and thyroid. [View Article](#)

Flu Season Off To Slow Start, Officials Say

25 November - The Boston Globe reported that the [flu](#) season in the United States is off to a slow start, with only Delaware and New York reporting significant outbreaks -- a relief to government health authorities, given the US vaccine shortage. Even so, the reported "widespread" flu activity in Delaware -- the first state to be classified at the nation's highest flu level -- is a bit misleading. The state meets the designation because confirmed cases had been found in every county. But the state has only three counties and six cases in all. Outbreaks in nursing homes in New York prompted the CDC to classify that state as having "regional" flu activity -- one step below "widespread." Most other states listed "sporadic" flu cases. [View Article](#)

Illinois and New Mexico Governors Write to Aventis Pasteur

27 November – The State Journal-Register reported that Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson sent a letter to Aventis Pasteur, asking company officials to cooperate with federal authorities in determining the safety of European-manufactured [flu vaccine](#). "Please do not put politics or concern over price differentials between Europe and the United States ahead of the well-being of hundreds of thousands of people," they wrote. The Blagojevich administration has bought 300,000 European-manufactured doses for \$2.5 million to \$2.7 million, but has yet to receive approval from the federal Food and Drug Administration to ship and distribute the vaccine. New Mexico has purchased 150,000 doses, while New York City has bought 200,000 doses. Illinois officials have been in daily contact with the FDA, which has requested manufacturing and clinical records from both Aventis and GlaxoSmithKline. Officials with the German manufacturer have complied with FDA requests, but Aventis has stalled. [View Article](#)

Possible Botulism Reported After Cosmetic Injections

1 December - CIDRAP News reported that four people in Florida and New Jersey who might have been injected with the anti-wrinkle medication Botox are seriously ill with possible [botulism](#). Botox contains minute amounts of botulinum toxin, which causes muscle paralysis and is the most lethal known substance. A man and woman in their 50s were in critical condition at Palm Beach Gardens (Florida) Medical Center. They had gone to a Fort Lauderdale clinic called Advanced Integrated Medical Center for Botox injections. Two other people were being treated at a hospital in New Jersey for possible botulism. The New Jersey patients were at the Florida clinic the same day they were

there. Schallop said he suspected all four patients might have fallen ill because of contaminated doses of Botox or some other drug. All four patients were on mechanical ventilators. [View Article](#)

Red Cross Sees Problems at Guantanamo

30 November – Yahoo! News reported that the International Committee of the Red Cross has given the Bush administration a confidential report critical of U.S. treatment of terror suspects detained at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. But the Red Cross, which is the only independent monitor allowed to visit the facility, refused to confirm or deny a New York Times account that the ICRC report described the psychological and physical coercion used at Guantanamo as "tantamount to torture." A prominent New York attorney working closely with Defense Department lawyers who have seen the report, however, confirmed the characterization and said it raised new concerns about doctors violating [medical ethics](#) in pointing out prisoners' weaknesses to interrogators. The Bush administration rejected the ICRC accusations that detainees were in any way abused at Guantanamo. [View Article](#)

Rocket Fuel Chemical Found In Water, Produce

1 December - CNN reported that the government has found traces of a rocket fuel chemical in organic milk in Maryland, green leaf lettuce grown in Arizona and bottled spring water from Texas and California. What's not clear is the significance of the data, collected by the Food and Drug Administration. Sufficient amounts of [perchlorate](#) can affect the thyroid, potentially causing delayed development and other problems. But Environmental Protection Agency official Kevin Mayer called for calm, saying: "Alarm is not warranted. That is clear." "I think that it is important that EPA and FDA and other agencies come to some resolution about the toxicity of this chemical," Mayer said. The FDA said in a statement that consumers should not change their eating habits in response to the test results. The FDA has hypothesized that perchlorate may get into plants after they are irrigated with perchlorate-containing water or grown in soil that has been previously exposed to the chemical. [View Article](#)

Supreme Court to Hear Marijuana Case

29 November – The Washington Post reported that the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on whether the Constitution permits the federal government to take action against those who use homegrown [marijuana](#) for medicinal reasons within states where it is legal to do so. The legal issues this time give the case importance well beyond the 11 states that have eased or eliminated penalties for medical use of marijuana. The plaintiffs claim that federal drug busts exceed Washington's authority under the commerce clause of the Constitution, which gives Congress the power to regulate trade "among the several states." "This case is and always has been about federalism and state sovereignty," the plaintiffs' lawyers argue in their brief. But the Bush administration counters that even small-scale use of a fungible commodity such as marijuana can affect price and quantity in the black market. [View Article](#) (registration required)

Suspect Animal Tests Negative For Mad Cow

23 November – MSNBC.com reported that tests found that a cow suspected of harboring a second U.S. case of [mad cow disease](#) was not infected. Two confirmatory tests were run on a sample from the animal and both returned negative results. Two initial tests at the state level had returned positive. Two earlier possible cases were reported this summer; both turned out negative. In August, USDA officials changed their testing policies, requiring multiple tests at the state level to confirm a possible case. Barbara Powers, director of the Veterinary Diagnostic Services Laboratory at Colorado State

University in Fort Collins, said the odds of a false positive would be about one in 100,000 if the test is repeated according to current guidelines. Referring to the current sample, she said, "This is completely within the realm of what you'd get with a false positive." FDA rules released in July banned the use of some high-risk animal protein in food and cosmetic products — things like brains and spinal cords, as well as meat from downers. But it delayed action on broader rules: a ban on mammalian blood and poultry litter in cattle feed; requiring feed mills to use separate equipment for cattle feed; and prohibiting meat scraps in feed. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Bacterial Outbreak Kills Six People in Baguio City, Philippines

23 November - The Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that an airborne bacterial outbreak has killed six people in Baguio City (250 km north of Manila). [Meningococccemia](#) has affected eight residents this month. Fearful residents here have resorted to wearing face masks and buying self-prescribed antibiotics at drugstores. Meningococccemia, a disease caused by a bacterium known as neisseria meningitidis, targets the central nervous system and can be fatal within 24 hours. The outbreak started on 3 October and peaked on 17 November when three people died. Health officials state that the outbreak situation is manageable because the cases come sporadically. [View Article](#)

Hong Kong: Two More Children Sick with Respiratory Infection

21 November - The Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that two additional children are ill with fever and symptoms of respiratory infections at the Caritas Medical Center where an outbreak of [respiratory disease](#) has killed one child and sickened another 33. It is not yet known whether the two children have the parainfluenza virus infection, which 19 of the infected children were found to have contracted. Of the 36 children that have so far been isolated, three have fully recovered. The outbreak started on 5 November 2004 and quickly spread. Whether the virus is parainfluenza virus 3 or 4 has yet to be clarified. [View Article](#)

India to Start Trial of New HIV Vaccine

1 December - CNN reported that India, home to the world's second largest [HIV](#) population after South Africa, is set to begin human trials of a new vaccine against the virus in January. The country has over 5.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS and experts saying the number could quadruple by 2010. Human trials of vaccines against different strains of the virus are already being conducted in the United States, Europe, Africa and South America. The Indian trial will focus on sub-type C of the virus, the most common in the country. "It will be the first test in India of a HIV vaccine on humans," said Ramesh Paranjape, a deputy director of the National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) based in Pune, around 100 miles south of Bombay. In August the World Bank warned the disease would become the single largest cause of death in the world's second most populous country unless there was a change in treatment policy and progress on prevention. [View Article](#)

Indonesia: Dengue Outbreaks in Medan and Indragiri Hilir Regions

25 November - The Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that 14 people have died of [dengue](#) and dozens are hospitalized after cases peaked in the Medan and Indragiri Hilir

regions (north Sumatra) during the past two weeks. The outbreak began in Medan in April. Schools and houses have been fogged with insecticide to eradicate mosquito larvae and eggs. Medan residents have also been encouraged to clean their bathrooms and drains to eliminate mosquito breeding areas. Dengue has also been spreading in the Indragiri Hilir area in Riau province for the past two weeks and eight people have died. Earlier this year, between January and February, the fever spread to 19 of the country's 32 provinces and killed almost 200 people. So far this year there have been 10,140 dengue cases with 195 deaths nationwide, mostly in Central Java, East Java and Jakarta. [View Article](#)

Indonesia: Malaria Outbreak in Aceh

24 November - The Asia-Pacific Disease Outbreak/Surveillance Report stated that at least 47 people in West Aceh regency (north Sumatra) died in the past eight months of [malaria](#). The malaria outbreak hit the Trieng subdistrict. The outbreak occurred after residents left their plantations unattended due to the prolonged conflict in the province, providing the ideal environment for the anopheles mosquito to breed. When residents returned to their houses after the conflict subsided, the number of mosquitoes had already grown leading to a malaria outbreak. The malaria outbreak has claimed at least 117 lives in the district. Malaria has also taken lives of another 91 people in the neighboring East Woyla district. The high number of fatalities was caused by the lack of medical facilities and delay in receiving treatment. Most of the victims lived in remote areas. [View Article](#)

Japanese Cows Get ID Codes

30 November – HealthDayNews reported that in an attempt to ease fears about [mad cow disease](#), Japan will give all cows in the country an identification code that can be checked by consumers before they dig into their steaks or other beef products. Consumers will be able to enter the codes into their cell phones or computers in order to trace the history of individual cows, from birth to slaughter and into supermarket coolers and freezers. This information about the source of their beef will allow people to avoid meat from farms with a history of previous mad cow disease. The ID system will apply to both Japanese-bred and imported beef cattle. Japan is the only Asian country that's had confirmed mad cow disease. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Surgery Performed Aboard 'Air Hospital'

1 December – Yahoo! News reported that doctors on a turbulence-free flight performed surgery 19,000 feet above the jungles of Colombia on the inaugural outing of the military's "Air Hospital," the country's new effort to save the lives of troops wounded in its war against Marxist insurgents. "The plane was steady and so was my hand," lead surgeon Ricardo Barragan said over the drone of the C-130's engines. He had just made a pressure-relieving incision down the arm of a man badly burned in an accident at a military base. The U.S.-funded Air Hospital culminates a year of improvements in medical care for soldiers wounded by anti-personnel mines, rebel snipers and in firefights. The death rate for soldiers wounded in action has fallen by 14 percent this year. Now 19 of every 100 soldiers wounded in action die, said Capt. Francisco Nunez, assistant director of the military's department of health. In 2003, wounded soldiers waited between 24 and 36 hours to receive medical attention. The average response time is now less than six hours, Nunez said. It is likely to drop even further once the Air Hospital goes into full operation in early 2005. [View Article](#)

Please contact us to comment on or suggest improvements to this report.

Eileen Resta
eileen.resta@amedd.army.mil

Tyson Grier
tyson.grier@amedd.army.mil

Approved:
[Kevin Delaney](#)
Chief, Health Information Operations
(410) 436-5217 or DSN 584-5217